

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application claims benefit pursuant to 35 U.S.C. § 120 of U.S. Application No. 09/826,675 filed April 5, 2001, *now Patent no. 6,702,181* which claims benefit pursuant to 35 U.S.C. § 120 of U.S. Application No. 09/076,051 filed May 11, 1998, *now Patent no. 6,315,195* which claims benefit pursuant to 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) of U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/082,299 filed April 17, 1998, and the disclosures of each are incorporated herein by reference.

TECHNICAL FIELD

This invention relates to devices for conducting financial transactions. Specifically this invention relates to a transaction apparatus and system which enables a single card with a programmable memory to be used as a substitute for a plurality of conventional credit cards, identification cards, benefit cards and other objects which include indicia such as magnetic indicia or bar code.

BACKGROUND ART

The most common type of credit and debit cards in use today are magnetic stripe type cards. The standardized format used for such cards includes indicia on a front side of the card. Such indicia identifies the card owner, an account number, a card type, a card issuer, an expiration date as well as possibly other information. Such indicia is presented as raised letters and numbers which can be used to make an impression on a multipart carbon or carbonless form. The rear of such cards have a magnetic stripe supported thereon. The magnetic stripe includes several tracks of information. This information includes magnetic indicia representative of the information found on the front of the card as well as other information that is used in processing transactions electronically. Magnetic stripe cards are commonly used for credit card types such